



Maryland Energy Administration

TO: Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

FROM: MEA

SUBJECT: SB 536 - Environment - Nuclear Power Plants - Emergency Preparedness (Radiation and Emergency Preparedness and Protection Act)

DATE: March 5, 2024

MEA Position: FAVORABLE

This bill would largely codify existing practices to support the Maryland Department of the Environment's (MDE's) Radiological Emergency Preparedness Program and the Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM).

Nuclear reactors and power plants have complex safety and security features. An uncontrolled reaction in a nuclear reactor could result in widespread contamination of air and water. The risk of this happening at nuclear power plants in the United States is small because of the diverse and redundant barriers and safety systems in place at nuclear power plants; the training and skills of the reactor operators; testing and maintenance activities; and the regulatory requirements and oversight of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC).

MDE and MDEM currently train staff, prepare response plans, participate in emergency response drills, and undertake other relevant activities to ensure the State is adequately prepared to respond to accidents at facilities that use nuclear fuel to generate electricity. Also, portions of time for nearly two dozen staff within the Department's Radiological Health Program are spent on ongoing refresher training throughout any year to be able to provide adequate coverage across all job stations during a one-day preparedness exercise or an actual event that may last multiple days involving round-the-clock coverage.

MDE and MDEM have received funds from fixed nuclear power owners in past years to support the activities described above. These payments were not driven by State regulatory or statutory requirements, but were made through an MOU agreement between the owner and MDE to fulfill the owner's obligations under the NRC and Atomic Energy Act.

Therefore, the Maryland Energy Administration urges the committee to codify these provisions in statute, and to issue a **favorable report**.

Our sincere thanks for your consideration of this testimony. For questions or additional information, please contact Landon Fahrig, Legislative Liaison, directly (landon.fahrig@maryland.gov, 410.931.1537).